

Application No.: 10/727,916

Final Office Action Dated: October 20, 2005

Response to Final Office Action Dated: November 29, 2005

**In the Claims:**

Claims 1-5 (cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for welding metal sheets to form tailored blanks, characterized by at least one detection device for detecting the edge line of the sheet edges to be welded, a control unit for identifying one of the detected edges as the dominant edge and for transmitting control signals to at least one machining unit arranged in the apparatus for machining the non-dominant edge, the dominant edge being determined so as to incur generally the smallest possible amount of machining for the non-dominant edge.

7. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 6, characterized in that the control unit is configured for the transmission of control signals to a discard unit whereby one of the sheets can be discarded from the apparatus before welding takes place.

Claims 8-16 (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for welding metal sheets together along an edge of each metal sheet comprising:  
at least one detection device for detecting an edge line of each sheet;  
a control unit for identifying a metal sheet edge to be welded as a dominant edge, and another metal sheet edge as a non-dominant edge, the dominant edge being determined so as to incur generally the smallest possible amount of machining for the non-dominant edge, and  
a means for reworking the non-dominant edge.

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18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the means for reworking the non-dominant edge includes at least one pressing tool.

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the control unit is capable of transmitting control signals to a discard unit to discard a metal sheet from the apparatus prior to welding.

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the control unit includes means for controlling a welding device.

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for welding metal sheets together along an edge of each metal sheet comprising:

at least one detection device, including at least one sensor, for detecting an edge line of each sheet;

a discard unit for discarding a metal sheet from the apparatus prior to welding;

a means for welding the metal sheets together;

a control unit for identifying one of the metal sheet edges to be welded as a dominant edge and the other metal sheet edge to be welded as a non-dominant edge, the dominant edge being determined so as to incur generally the smallest possible amount of machining for the non-dominant edge, and wherein the control unit further includes means for transmitting control signals to the discard unit, and for transmitting data for use in controlling the means for welding; and

a means for reworking the non-dominant edge.